



# The Oversexualization of Young Adolescent Girls: Implications for Middle Grades Educators

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Today's girls and women are graduating from college, graduate, and professional schools at a rate that outpaces their male counterparts and are successful in the workforce at record levels (www.education-portal.com, 2007). Despite their achievements, there is also a current cultural trend that increasingly sexualizes girls and women and reduces them to limiting gendered stereotypes (Murnen, Smolak, Mills, & Good, 2003). As highlighted in *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*, today's young adolescent girls are frequently exposed to sexualized, unrealistic ideals portraying how girls and women should look and act (American Psychological Association [APA], 2007). According to Levin and Kilbourne (2008), children of both genders from all cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds are affected by these trends.

There are many reasons this problem should be of concern to middle grades educators. For students to achieve at high levels, educators must develop middle grades schools that are safe, inviting environments in which *all* adolescents can learn (National Middle School Association [NMSA], 2003). Further, as indicated in NMSA's *Standards on Middle Level Preparation* (NMSA, 2001), middle grades teacher candidates should be knowledgeable about students' development and aware

of "how the media portrays young adolescents and comprehend the implications of these portraits" (p. 4). Therefore, all educators should be aware of the sexualization of girlhood and the potential harms it can cause to girls' academic, career, psychosocial, and sexual development. In this article, we describe these effects on girls' development and give concrete implications for professional practice designed to counteract these cultural trends.

## Oversexualization of young adolescent girls

To fully understand the impact of sexualization on girls today, it is helpful to explore some aspects of the current cultural context in which they live. For example, on an average trip to the mall, middle school girls are inundated with sexualized merchandise marketed specifically for them (Levin & Kilbourne, 2008). They might see Victoria's Secret thong panties and bras designed for "tweens"—girls between the ages 7 and 12. They could visit Abercrombie and Fitch and purchase a tight-fitting T-shirt that reads, "Who needs brains when you have these?" Visiting a major department store, they might find the popular clothing line Pornstar,

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tween-size sweat pants with “Juicy” emblazoned across the backside, and padded bras in sizes as small as 30 AA. In tween specialty shops, they can purchase thongs stamped with a four-leaf clover and the slogan, “Feeling Lucky?,” Playboy Bunny merchandise, and a “Future Porn Star” T-shirt. At the bookstore, they will find their favorite teen magazines, with articles titled “Hallway Makeout Sessions: Dos and Don’ts,” “Your Total Turn-Him-On-Guide,” and “Boy Bait: 41 Moves He Can’t Resist” (as cited in Opplinger, 2008).

As she leaves the mall, she might be listening to Lil Wayne’s song “Lollipop” or Britney Spears’ “If You Seek Amy.” She may then go home and watch MTV, VH1, CMT, or BET, which are laden with images of nearly naked women provocatively dancing for the pleasure of men. She might also view reality shows portraying women as “catty” and “gold digging” (Levin & Kilbourne, 2008). It is clear that middle grades students are tuned in to these images. One study revealed that 49% of children ages 10 to 17 who responded to a Children Now poll indicated that they watched music videos daily (cited in Brown & Lamb, 2006). This is problematic, in that the more students are exposed to these sexualized media images and messages, the more likely they are to adopt attitudes that reduce girls and women to sexualized stereotypes (APA, 2007; Martino, et al., 2006; Ward & Friedman, 2006).

### Developmental considerations

The NMSA standards indicate that an understanding of the development of students is critical knowledge for middle level educators (NMSA, 2001). It is, therefore, important for educators to understand the ways in which current cultural trends related to the sexualization of girls may be exacerbated by key adolescent developmental milestones. According to Erikson (1963), the psychosocial life task adolescents need to master is resolution of a sense of personal identity over role confusion. During adolescence, children need to develop a sense of who they are within the context of their families and social systems, to accept and embrace their uniqueness, and to feel a sense of security and esteem—that they are persons worthy of respect from self and others. This is very difficult for girls, as they are also increasingly focused on “fitting in” and gaining acceptance from a social group (Olafson & Latta, 2002). Further, according to Piaget (1972), adolescents may be transitioning in their cognitive development from

concrete operations to formal operational thought, a process through which they learn to take other people’s perspectives (i.e., How might others view me?) and compare themselves to others on multiple dimensions. During this time, students tend to be egocentric and overly self-conscious, and perceive that others are judging them based on social expectations (Elkind & Bowen, 1979; Levin & Kilbourne, 2008).

### Self-objectification

As young adolescent girls look to the media to discern cultural standards for success as a female, they receive a strong message that a girl’s worth is primarily determined by how beautiful, thin, hot, and sexy she is (Levin & Kilbourne, 2008). Despite the current trends toward “girl power,” the message to girls is clear: To be considered successful, they must also be hot and sexy (Hinshaw, 2009). Self-objectification theory helps to explain the process through which girls internalize these messages



*Positive middle grades experiences can interest girls in professions traditionally dominated by males, such as science and engineering.*  
photo by Carolina Springs Middle School yearbook staff

so that they become part of their own personal belief and value systems (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). As girls observe cultural trends equating women’s primary worth with a sexualized appearance, they also begin to

notice the ways females are treated in their everyday lives. As a result of their cultural and personal observations, it is not surprising that many girls begin to believe and adopt these messages. Over time, girls may begin to self-objectify, viewing their bodies and their appearance as objects to be evaluated by others. Instead of evaluating themselves from a first person perspective (“How do *I* think I look or feel?”), they focus on themselves from a third person perspective—as they believe others will be judging them (“How are others judging my body and appearance?”). Girls who self-objectify chronically monitor themselves, worrying excessively about others’ judgments and negative evaluations. Girls as young as age 11 who are preoccupied with self-monitoring and fear of not meeting others’ expectations are more likely to experience negative psychological outcomes including shame, anxiety, poor self-esteem, depression, and eating disorders (Lindberg, Grabe, & Hyde, 2007; McKinley, 1999; Tolman, Impett, Tracy, & Michael, 2006).

### **Harms to academic and career development**

The middle grades is a critical time for girls’ academic and career development (Dillow, Flack, & Peterman, 1994), and one concern about the sexualization of girls is that self-objectification has a negative impact on these areas (Frederickson et al., 1998; Gapinski, Brownell, & LaFrance, 2003). When a middle school girl engages in self-objectification, she spends her mental resources on body monitoring, self-evaluation, and concerns about others’ negative judgments. She, therefore, has a decreased capacity to fully engage in challenging activities, including academic tasks.

For example, in one study, college women were asked to wear a swimsuit and observe themselves in a full-length mirror while completing a complex math problem. Compared to women who were asked to wear a sweater instead of a swimsuit, the women in the swimsuit condition performed significantly worse on the math test (Frederickson et al., 1998). Even though this study was conducted with college students, adolescent girls are likely just as vulnerable to the negative effects of self-objectification (Lindberg et al., 2007). The more a girl worries about how her appearance and body measure up to cultural standards of beauty and sexiness, and the more she ruminates about the ways that others may be judging her, the less mental energy she will have to meet academic challenges. Specifically, according to Herr

(1996), “Girls often emerge from middle school with a lowered sense of self-esteem, a discouragement with school, and a school performance that does not match earlier achievements” (p. 16).

One other potentially harmful effect of the sexualization of girls in the academic setting is the promotion of sexual harassment. As girls and women are increasingly portrayed in popular culture according to limiting gendered stereotypes, it is easier for them to be viewed as simplified objects, not as complex individuals with an array of talents and interests. In this kind of environment, it becomes easier for students to treat girls with less empathy and respect. As girls are objectified, they are more likely to be treated in sexually degrading ways, resulting in sexual harassment or even sexual assault. Girls who are sexually harassed at school experience significant negative outcomes including difficulties in concentration, avoidance of specific individuals, changes in school attendance, and lower self-esteem (Duffy, Wareham, & Walsh, 2004). Further, girls who adopt current sexualized cultural attitudes may be more likely to view sexual harassment as normal and even expected behavior from others (Grube & Lens, 2003). In fact, they may confuse sexual harassment from boys or men with the attention that they actually desire from romantic partners.

In addition to academic concerns, current cultural trends can be harmful to girls’ career development. The middle grades is a pivotal time for young adolescents to develop an understanding of their personal values, aptitudes, interests, and aspirations related to career. According to Gottfredson’s (1981) career theory, career aspiration develops simultaneously with self-concept. Further, Gottfredson explained that people tend to seek careers that are in line with their self-concept and their perceived place in society. While there are many successful role models for girls, including doctors, lawyers, educators, and scientists, there are far more female role models in popular media who are in sexualized roles such as beauty pageant contestants, plastic surgery patients, video vixens, or reality television stars. Even in popular media that portray women in nontraditional careers, they are often framed as primarily sexy. For example, the women in the *Charlie’s Angels* movies are undercover private investigators who use sex as one part of the repertoire of skills for capturing dangerous criminals. Another example is the hit TV show and movie series *Sex and the City*, in which



four professional friends (a writer, a lawyer, gallery manager, and a public relations agent) live the single life in New York, repeatedly discussing their sexual relationships and spending much of their time and energy pursuing men and trying to look attractive. This is the typical contradictory message: Although women can be successful in a variety of careers, they are ultimately still charged with the obligation of being aesthetically pleasing to their male counterparts. Unfortunately, in efforts to please others and to gain male attention, girls may make educational and career decisions that could negatively impact their futures.

### **Harms to psychosocial and sexual development**

The sexualization of girls may also impact their social and emotional development. When girls judge themselves on cultural standards of sexiness, they may have lower esteem and self-worth if they feel they do not meet those standards (Choate & Curry, 2009; Opplinger, 2008). In fact, media images clearly convey the message that girls' and women's happiness can only be achieved through reaching an unrealistic standard of beauty (Levine & Smolak, 2002). During adolescence, girls turn to media such as television and magazines and rely heavily on these sources for information on weight loss and appearance. Those girls who most frequently view and value these media messages experience the greatest levels

and bulimia (APA, 2007; Stice & Shaw, 2003; Tolman, Impett, Tracy, & Michael, 2006).

Finally, current sexualized cultural trends are harmful to girls' healthy sexual development. This is no surprise, since the media inundates children with sexual images that are "devoid of emotions, attachment, or consequences" (Levin & Kilbourne, 2008, p. 5). As girls internalize these messages, they increasingly present themselves socially in overly sexualized ways. For example, some middle grades girls send nude pictures of themselves and sexual text messages by cell phones to boys at school. In one study, one in five girls between the ages 13 and 16 admitted to having sent nude or semi-nude pictures of themselves (Albert & Crabbe, 2008), and sometimes these pictures filter into the school environment. In one case, a group of seventh grade girls in a middle school sent nude pictures of themselves to a large group of seventh grade boys. These pictures were then shown to other students via cell phone, at school, in the hallways, and on the school bus. Further, girls are increasingly posting sexual images of themselves on Internet media such as personal websites, blogs, and MySpace and Facebook pages, and engaging in cybersex activities.

Girls have also displayed sexualized self-representations at school through their choice of clothing (e.g., very short mini-skirts, low cut tops) and accessories (e.g., jellied bracelets colorized to indicate sexual accomplishments) (Conway & Vermette, 2006).

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of body dissatisfaction (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002). As a girl adopts unrealistic media images as her standard for comparison, she will likely become dissatisfied with her appearance. Further, girls do not simply become dissatisfied with their appearance when they internalize cultural standards; rather, they experience an overall sense of failure as a person (McKinley, 1999). Because body image is so highly related to adolescent girls' overall sense of self-worth, research consistently demonstrates that body dissatisfaction is associated with depression, poor self-esteem, early smoking onset, unnecessary cosmetic surgery, and eating disorders such as anorexia

More examples occurring directly within the school environment include students dancing in sexually suggestive ways at school dances and in routines performed by cheerleaders and dance squads, and students dressing in revealing clothing at extracurricular school activities (Levin & Kilbourne, 2008). These examples demonstrate ways in which middle grades girls may implicitly suggest that they are interested in and ready for sex, even though they may not even understand the implications of how they are presenting themselves to others.

Due to these sexualized Internet and media influences, girls today may not know what a healthy sexual relationship is and how to garner respect in a

caring relationship. A further concern is that girls may be engaging in sexual activity at increasingly young ages (Atwood, 2006; Conway & Verrmette, 2006). The consequences of early sexual activity that precede normative sexual development include a greater number of sexual partners, increased risk of pregnancy, increased risk of exposure to and contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, and the emotional consequences that come from abusive relationships or not knowing how to process sexual behaviors and their consequences (Atwood, 2006; Ganeva, 2008; Hinshaw, 2009).

oversexualization of girls. Administrators can provide faculty with in-service programs to highlight current issues of young adolescent girls, allow faculty to explore and reflect on how these concerns emerge in the classroom, and familiarize faculty with a variety of resources to help address these issues (see Appendix A). As faculty and staff collectively examine the hidden curriculum of sexualization, or messages that are implicit about the value of girls, they can work to eliminate gender bias (e.g., allowing boys to be leaders, letting boys answer math questions more frequently than girls).

**Administrators should give particular attention to the issue of sexual harassment, as both boys and girls may be confused as to appropriate sexual boundaries in the school setting.**

## Implications for middle grades stakeholders

While middle grades educators continue to develop ways to encourage girls to be successful at school and to promote their entry into nontraditional careers, they cannot ignore the developmental and cultural trends discussed here. As stated in the study *Major Findings on Girls and Education*, commissioned by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and researched by the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women (1992):

As girls mature, they confront a culture that both idealizes and exploits the sexuality of young women while assigning them roles that are clearly less valued than male roles. If we do not begin to discuss more openly the ways in which ascribed power ... affects individual lives, we cannot truly prepare our students for responsible citizenship. (p. 3)

To help middle grades educators increase their awareness of sexualized cultural trends and to develop ways to address these problems, we propose the following strategies for all middle grades stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, counselors, and parents.

### Administrators

Middle grades administrators can play an important role in implementing school-wide interventions that raise awareness of the problems associated with the

Administrators can also encourage faculty to remain mindful in acknowledging all students' strengths and positive qualities (Lane, 2005).

Administrators should give particular attention to the issue of sexual harassment, as both boys and girls may be confused about appropriate sexual boundaries in the school setting. Administrators and their faculties can access the free, downloadable workbook *Harassment-Free Hallways: How to Stop Sexual Harassment in School* (AAUW, 2002), which contains resources, worksheets, questionnaires, and information for teachers and parents. In addition to the workbook, they can access a PowerPoint presentation that may be used to present this topic to both faculty and parents.

### Middle school counselors

Middle school counselors can provide multiple services to assist girls in developing a healthy self-concept. First, school counselors should encourage girls to register for rigorous courses (especially in math and science) and continue to provide career education to assist girls in establishing efficacy for career and academic success.

Second, school counselors can provide large-group guidance for students that assists in the development of media literacy, empathy, and leadership skills (Choate & Curry, 2009). According to the Media Education Foundation (2004), educators should teach media literacy in four steps:

1. Students learn how to identify harmful cultural images.

2. Students deconstruct underlying messages in the images.
3. Students practice ways to actively resist the messages.
4. Students work to change the messages in their schools and communities.

For example, students can view advertisements from magazines and learn about techniques used to enhance models' images, including soft-focus cameras and digital editing. They can begin to understand the underlying messages in ads by asking questions such as: Do real people look like these models? Will buying this product help me look like this? If I use this product, would my life really become like the life portrayed in this ad? What might be the consequences of these messages for students? What do they tell us about the roles of women and men in society? What do they tell us about what it takes to be successful? (Media Education Foundation; Small, 2001).

Next, students can learn strategies for resisting harmful messages by replacing them with more rational thoughts (e.g., "The model in this ad doesn't really look like this. I don't have to look like her to be happy or to feel good about myself."). Another strategy is for students to practice what they would say to a younger girl who seems overly influenced by the images she sees in magazines (Stice, Presnell, Gau, & Shaw, 2007). A final step in media literacy is for counselors to take an advocacy approach by inviting students to participate with parents, school faculty, and other stakeholders in a collaborative effort to combat the sexualization of girls. For example, a group of 13- to 16-year-old girls protested T-shirts printed by Abercrombie & Fitch that said, "Who needs a brain when you've got these?" The girls organized a "girlcott" of the T-shirts, asking other girls to not buy the shirts, and they received national news attention for their efforts. The shirts were pulled from Abercrombie & Fitch stores as a result.

In addition to teaching media literacy, school counselors can also play an important role in assisting students as they develop empathy skills. As previously stated, middle grades students begin to have the capacity to fully understand another person's feelings and perspective (Piaget, 1972), but they may not necessarily have the skills to use these newly formed abilities. Students can role-play various scenarios in which a student is the victim of gossip or other harassment due to her appearance. They can consider what her

feelings might be in the scenario and can practice taking each character's perspective in viewing the situation. Counselors also can encourage students to brainstorm possible empathic actions they can take each day to create a culture of kindness and respect in their school (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003).

Finally, middle grades counselors can encourage students to become involved in extracurricular activities that promote leadership skills. Activities that are not based upon appearance or social status—such as sports, spiritual endeavors, service-learning, and other extracurricular activities—allow students to develop leadership skills and meaningful interests. For example, one school counselor sponsored a student-initiated club called Students Taking a Right Stand (STARS). This group of boys and girls focused on positive messages for teens and provided opportunities for members to



*Extracurricular activities can help girls develop self-esteem, confidence, and leadership skills. photo by Carolina Springs Middle School yearbook staff*

be community leaders. Activities of this group included becoming trained in the Teens Against Tobacco Use program (American Heart Association), letter-writing campaigns to companies regarding conscientious advertising, a mentorship program for new students, conflict resolution training, and coordinating school-wide community service projects (e.g., collecting winter coats for families in need and food for the local food bank). Membership in the club was open to all



students, and there was no cost to join; further, the club met during school hours, so transportation was not an issue for students. This club gave students a forum for expressing their concerns about negative cultural messages and empowered them to do something positive to make a change.

### **Middle grades teachers**

Teachers can become more self-aware regarding a number of issues related to the sexualization of girls. It is important for faculty to critically reflect on the impact of the language they use to describe girls (e.g., calling girls “drama queens,” “divas,” or “princesses”). Instead of labeling them with gendered, stereotypical terms, faculty can model respectful language that reflects girls’ value. Further, educators should avoid using male dominated language (i.e., “mankind”) (Schmurak, 1994) and refrain from making comments about girls’ bodies, which could encourage preoccupation with physical appearance (e.g., “It looks like you’re losing weight.”). Faculty can also learn effective ways of intervening when they see girls being bullied or sexually harassed based on their appearance, clothing, and sexiness. Specifically, teachers can be diligent about (a) ensuring girls take an active role in leadership activities, (b) providing opportunities for students to reflect on their unique positive qualities not related to appearance or body image, (c) providing nontraditional career role models (i.e., male nurses, female engineers), (d) infusing career and academic information that is gender neutral and supportive of nontraditional career choices throughout the curriculum, and (e) encouraging media literacy so that students learn to question social stereotypes and sexualized messages.

Next, she asked students to write actual advertisements that captured what the product was really about. In this assignment, students used creativity, writing skills, group work and collaboration, and public speaking, and learned about media literacy. By infusing this type of assignment into the curriculum, the teacher did not have to abandon the skills her students needed to learn, but rather capitalized on the opportunity to help them gain more insight and awareness into media influences.

Another teacher discussed issues of gender (along with other topics) with her reading class. After reading the chapter titled “Boys and Girls” from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, she asked the students about how the character Esperanza viewed the roles of men and women in her Mexican American culture. The teacher then asked questions such as: What are the differences between boys and girls, according to Esperanza? What benefits does she see as to how boys are treated? What are some of the benefits, in her mind, of being a girl? How is Esperanza’s cultural concept of being male or female similar to what it means to be a male or female in our school? How is it different? What does Esperanza want to change about how girls are treated? What do you think needs to change about how girls or boys are treated in our school today? She also used this conversational style when the class read classic pieces of literature and facilitated student discussions on the ways in which gender roles and portrayals of gender have changed throughout history.

Teachers can ask students to write essays about current events or issues teens have experienced related to the topic of sexualization and then facilitate a classroom discussion about the essays. For example, one teacher had students write an essay on the topic “What

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One middle school language arts teacher assigned a writing project that required students to examine commercials and deconstruct the intrinsic messages in the commercial that were not related to the product (for example, selling office supplies by using excitement or sex rather than providing information about the product).

Adults Don’t Know About Teen Life Today.” The teacher allowed the students to direct the conversation that followed. The teacher then placed students in groups to brainstorm how these issues could be addressed by either adults or teens. Similarly, a middle school art

teacher talked to students about how the media portrays what is “beautiful” or “attractive” and then had students create collages that represented personal qualities they valued most. Instead of limiting their collages to physical attributes, many of the students focused on personal values to represent their ideas about beauty.

## Parents and family

Administrators, teachers, and counselors can work with parents to promote girls’ positive body image and to mitigate the effects of negative media. One civics teacher had her students complete a family tree during the first week of class. As part of this assignment, students interviewed family members to explore family relationships and learn information about family values, traditions, and beliefs. This allowed the teacher to get to know the students and families better and required the students to engage with their families to complete the project. It also enabled students to see how their values were similar to or different from other family members and encouraged them to reflect on personal values. Later in the semester, the same teacher asked students to complete computerized Venn diagrams that had one circle designated for cultural values, as represented by the media and larger cultural influences; one circle for the student’s family values; and one circle for the student’s personal values. Values that were shared by all three were placed in the center of the Venn diagram. Students wrote a reflection paper regarding insights they gained from this activity.

Finally, administrators and counselors can provide a workshop on this topic for parents and community members. During the workshop, presenters can explain the negative effects of sexualization trends and provide parents with guidelines for having conversations with their children about these issues. An excellent resource for engaging young adolescents and adults in such conversations is the Words Can Work website ([www.wordscanwork.com](http://www.wordscanwork.com)). Parents may also be interested in letter-writing campaigns that demand media producers provide responsible advertising. They might even organize protests or call on local media coverage of certain products or advertisements (Levin & Kilbourne, 2008). In addition to these efforts, middle grades faculty may wish to provide resources to assist parents in better understanding these issues (see Appendix A).

## Conclusion

This article was meant to familiarize readers with ways in which the media and popular culture sexualize and stereotype girls and women and to raise awareness about the extent to which girls in the middle grades may be impacted by the sexualized media content they view. By framing the problem and its consequences through self-objectification theory, we demonstrated how girls internalize sexualized messages and experience related developmental harms. Finally, we offered strategies to assist middle grades faculty and other stakeholders as they work to counter the damaging trend toward the sexualization of young adolescent girls.

Young adolescent girls have more opportunities today than ever before in history, but it is important that their self-worth and dignity not be compromised by the current cultural context. School personnel can play a critical role in this process by giving students frequent opportunities to reflect on what their values are and who they want to be, without the influence of dominant cultural stereotypes that tend to limit their options. By gaining awareness and opening discussion with all middle grades stakeholders to help them understand these trends and stereotypes, we can give today’s young adolescents greater opportunities for optimal growth and development.

### Extensions

In what ways has the culture of sexualization infiltrated your school environment? How is your school different in this regard from the school you attended during the middle grades?

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**Appendix:** Resource list for middle grades personnel

Specific Topics	Web Address
Media Literacy	<p>Awareness Network   <a href="http://www.media-awareness.ca">www.media-awareness.ca</a></p> <p>Girls, Women + Media Project   <a href="http://www.mediaandwomen.org">www.mediaandwomen.org</a></p> <p>Mind on the Media   <a href="http://www.mindonthemedia.org">www.mindonthemedia.org</a></p> <p>MediaLiteracy.com   <a href="http://www.medialiteracy.com">www.medialiteracy.com</a></p> <p>About-Face   <a href="http://www.about-face.org">www.about-face.org</a></p> <p>Children Now   <a href="http://www.childrennow.org/index.php/learn/medias_impact/">www.childrennow.org/index.php/learn/medias_impact/</a></p>
Advocacy for Girls	<p>Campaign for a Commercial-free Childhood <a href="http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org">www.commercialfreechildhood.org</a></p> <p>Shaping Youth   <a href="http://www.shapingyouth.com">www.shapingyouth.com</a></p> <p>PBS Kids Go!   <a href="http://www.pbskids.org/dontbuyit/">www.pbskids.org/dontbuyit/</a></p>
Media Eating Disorders	<p>Advocacy Project for Positive National Eating Disorders Association <a href="http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org">www.nationaleatingdisorders.org</a></p>
Empowerment, Activism, and Mentoring	<p>Girls for a Change   <a href="http://www.girlsforachange.org">www.girlsforachange.org</a></p>
Media Literacy, Leadership, and Community Action	<p>Girls, Inc.   <a href="http://www.girlsinc.org">www.girlsinc.org</a></p>
Community Action	<p>Hardy Girls Healthy Women   <a href="http://www.hardygirlshealthywomen.org">www.hardygirlshealthywomen.org</a></p>
Focus on Relationships, Context, Environments, and Activism	<p>GENaustin: Girls Empowerment Network   <a href="http://www.genaustin.org">www.genaustin.org</a></p>
Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls	<p>Girl Empowerment Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls—Executive Summary   <a href="http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report.aspx">http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report.aspx</a></p>
Conversation Starters for Adults and Kids	<p>Words Can Work   <a href="http://www.wordscanwork.com">www.wordscanwork.com</a></p>
<p><b>Books</b></p> <p>Brashich, A. D. (2006). <i>All made up: A girl's guide to seeing through celebrity hype to celebrate real beauty</i>. New York: Bloomsbury USA/Walker &amp; Company.</p> <p>Cooke, K. (1996). <i>Real gorgeous: The truth about body and beauty</i>. New York: W.W. Norton.</p> <p>Dellasega, C., &amp; Nixon, C. (2003). <i>12 strategies that will end female bullying: Girl wars</i>. New York: Simon &amp; Schuster.</p> <p>Douglas, S. J. (1994). <i>Where the girls are: Growing up female with the mass media</i>. New York: Random House.</p> <p>Kilbourne, J. (2000). <i>Can't buy my love: Why women and girls must fight the addictive power of advertising</i>. New York: Touchstone.</p> <p>Lamb, S. (2001). <i>The secret lives of girls: What good girls really do—sex play, aggression, and their guilt</i>. New York: Free Press.</p> <p>Lamb, S., &amp; Brown, L. M. (2006). <i>Packaging girlhood: Rescuing our daughters from marketers' schemes</i>. New York: St. Martin's Press.</p> <p>Maine, M. (2000). <i>Body wars; Making peace with women's bodies—An Activist's guide</i>. Carlsbad, CA: Geurze Books.</p> <p>Media Education Foundation. (2004). Retrieved July 23, 2009, from <a href="http://www.media.ed.org">www.media.ed.org</a></p> <p>Richardson, B. L., &amp; Rehr, E. (2001). <i>101 Ways to help your daughter love her body</i>. New York: HarperCollins.</p> <p>Stice, E., Presnell, K., Gau, J., &amp; Shaw, H. (2007). Testing mediators of intervention effects in randomized controlled trials; An evaluation of two eating disorder prevention programs. <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i>, 75, 20–32.</p> <p>Underwood, M. K. (2003). <i>Social aggression among girls</i>. New York: Guilford Press.</p> <p>Wiseman, R. (2002). <i>Queen Bees and Wannabes</i>. New York: Three Rivers Press.</p>	